

contributions to the global community, I hope that they will join me in wishing the people of Taiwan a Happy Double Ten Day.

RECOGNIZING SOLDIERS OF THE  
NATIONAL GUARD ARMORY IN  
LEESBURG, FLORIDA

**HON. DANIEL WEBSTER**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, September 17, 2014*

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to recognize the soldiers of the National Guard Armory in Leesburg, Florida.

Alpha Company of the Leesburg National Guard Armory has bravely served both on American soil and overseas. In March 2005, soldiers of the 124th Infantry Regiment were deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. After conducting missions in Oman and Pakistan in 2008, Alpha Company deployed to Kuwait and conducted missions throughout Iraq, assisting the transition from Operation Iraqi Freedom to Operation New Dawn.

In Florida, Alpha Company has provided critical support in times of natural disaster. In 2004, service men and women aided victims of hurricanes that caused catastrophic damage around the state. Alpha Company also assisted Central Florida residents in 2007 when a series of tornadoes damaged thousands of homes and claimed several lives.

I want to extend my sincere appreciation to the soldiers of Alpha Company for their brave and selfless service in Central Florida and abroad. It is an honor to recognize them and all men and women in the United States' armed forces.

THE RUSSIANS KEEP MOVING  
WEST

**HON. TED POE**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, September 17, 2014*

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the Russian bear is back, seeking to devour his neighbors and reclaim his kingdom. Mr. Putin, or the Napoleon of Siberia as I like to call him, yearns for the glory days of the Soviet Union when the great communist empire extended from Latvia in the north to Tajikistan in the south. Putin is systematically reestablishing the Soviet Empire, but this time with Putin as king.

In November 2013, Putin bribed the then President of Ukraine with a payment of \$15 billion in exchange for cutting off negotiations with the European Union that would have integrated Ukraine more into the West.

When then President Yanukovich accepted the bribe, hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians took to the streets in peaceful protest. With the loss of the support of the people, in February 2014 the corrupt President left his gilded palace, resigned his position, and retreated back to Russia.

The people of Ukraine elected a new government who would represent their desire to be free and move closer to the West.

Putin did not like this one bit. So, he sent in his henchmen, first in Crimea and then in

towns in eastern Ukraine, to stir unrest. Then in came the Russian troops to "protect" the ethnic Russians from the crisis that Putin created.

We have seen this movie before. The Russians are doing the same thing to the Ukrainians in 2014 as they did to the Georgians in 2008.

In 2008, I was in Georgia just after the Russians invaded. Georgia was moving closer and closer to the West. Russia did not like this, so it decided to create instability. It sent in its henchmen to cause trouble. Then Putin sent in Russia troops and tanks to stop the trouble it created. Six years later, the Russians are still there.

This winter, the Russian bear is not going to go into hibernation. Mr. Putin is going to dial up the pressure. He knows how reliant much of Europe is on Russian energy. When the weather gets colder, much of Europe will be at the mercy of Putin in order to stay warm. Putin is not afraid to use energy as leverage. I know because I was in Ukraine when Russia turned off the gas in 2006. It was cold. Unless Europe diversifies, it is only going to become more reliant on Russian gas.

We have an easy solution to this. The United States is in the midst of an energy revolution. We have more natural gas than we can use. In fact, natural gas is being left in the ground and burnt off at the well head because producers have no domestic buyers. There is a glut in the market. But the government, that institution that always seems to get in the way, says producers cannot sell the gas abroad without permission first from the Department of Energy. The Department of Energy is like any government bureaucracy—slow as molasses. Meanwhile, the Europeans are months away from being subject to Russian blackmail.

That's why I introduced H.R. 4155, the Fight Russian Energy Exploitation (FREE) Act. The bill would free up our gas to go to the former Soviet states like Ukraine and countries in the European Union. Our allies want our gas and are willing to pay for it. If we sell our gas to them, it means more money injected into our economy and more American jobs. It is so simple you wonder why it has not been done already.

Putin is in this for the long-term. Russian troops are still in Ukraine and just like in Georgia, they have no plans on leaving. If the Ukrainian government is not going to move towards Russia, then Putin has decided he is going to make them as weak and unstable as possible so they cannot move towards the West in any meaningful way.

The Russians cannot be trusted. Back in 1994, in exchange for Ukraine giving up its nuclear weapons, Russia promised to respect the territorial integrity of Ukraine. The Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances was just a piece of paper to the Russians. So much for diplomacy and trusting the Russia bear not to eat more territory.

Appeasement is not the answer. Russia will keep taking as much as the West is willing to let them. Who knows who could be next—Latvia, Estonia, Moldova? What then? When will the West decide enough is enough?

The United States and Europe must come together. It is together that we can offer tough sanctions that will deal a big blow to Putin. As we tighten the economic noose around the Russia bear, we should loosen our ban on the export of crude oil and cut the red tape so we

can export more natural gas to our European partners. We should also stand behind President Poroshenko with meaningful economic and military aid. He is doing all he can to prevent the Russians from taking over more of his country, but he cannot do it alone.

Winter is coming. Free people that want to remain free, better take heed.

And that's just the way it is.

RECOGNIZING NATIONAL HEALTH  
IT WEEK

**HON. MICHAEL M. HONDA**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, September 17, 2014*

Mr. HONDA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize September 15–19, 2014 as the 9th annual National Health IT Week. This is an important opportunity to reflect upon the importance of health information technology in stimulating the U.S. economy and improving health care in our country. My own district, which includes Silicon Valley, is home to a growing number of innovative digital health startups and companies making an impact in health care. These companies are addressing some of health care's most pressing challenges with breakthrough technologies and services, all the while creating valuable jobs.

Health IT supports workforce development in the U.S. and exports opportunities abroad. The Bureau of Labor Statistics expects a need for thousands of new health IT jobs over the next decade. Health IT workforce development programs need visibility and connection to the Administration's programs for job creation. Congressional support is needed for funding to expand community college, university-based, and non-profit programs to train health IT workers. Policymakers need to work with non-profit associations and the business community to launch and support internships, apprenticeships, and fellowships that give students and transitioning professionals real-world experience. Federal agencies should work with U.S. companies, health care organizations, and non-profit associations to document lessons learned and best practices from the Meaningful Use Program and apply them to overseas markets.

In order to continue on this path, we need to provide incentives and frameworks to guide and reward these health care innovators. That is why I introduced H.R. 2363, the Health Care Innovation and Marketplace Technologies Act, which would create a new office of wireless health under the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and offer incentives for health care innovators. This legislation would not only create jobs, but also provide a regulatory framework for innovators who seek to grow companies and develop products to transform health care. It is imperative that we support these innovators, as it is clear that health IT supports workforce development in the U.S. We must also continue to prepare students and our workforce for the 21st century demands of the technology industry. The growth of health IT undoubtedly has the potential to stimulate the economy and bring much-needed innovation to our nation's healthcare sector.

Health information technology is essential to the transformation of health care in America,

and so I am happy to commemorate National Health IT Week.

RECOGNIZING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF BOTH THE LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND AND THE WILDERNESS ACT

**HON. JIM McDERMOTT**

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, September 17, 2014*

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 50th Anniversary of both the Land and Water Conservation Fund and the Wilderness Act, two momentous accomplishments for the environmental movement at both the time of their signing and today.

The technology sector in my district is booming. People come to Seattle not just because of our vibrant technology ecosystem or our business- and worker-friendly environment. They also come because smart, forward-thinking people for the past 50 years have set aside open space—preserving farmland, building parks, and conserving habitat.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund helped conserve iconic natural treasures in all fifty states, including Mount Rainier National Park in the great state of Washington. I am a frequent visitor to the beautiful San Juan Islands, another Washington gem protected by the LWCF. The Wilderness Act enabled the highest levels of protection for the stunning Alpine Lakes Wilderness, a natural landscape Seattleites are fortunate to have in their backyard.

Programs like the Land and Water Conservation Act and the Wilderness Act are not just good for the environment; they are good for people and the economy. I commend those who enacted these programs half a century ago and those working to promote this work today. It is imperative that we continue the legacy of preserving America's rich and diverse natural heritage.

CELEBRATING WILDERNESS WEEK  
2014

**HON. DAVID E. PRICE**

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, September 17, 2014*

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I rise in celebration of our nation's public lands and wilderness and in honor of Wilderness Week, observed September 13–18, 2014.

This year, Wilderness Week takes on special meaning, as this September marks the 50th anniversary of two enduring tools for American conservation: the Wilderness Act and the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Passed by Congress in 1964, these two acts

remain vital to our efforts of conserving the best of America's natural lands.

On September 3, 1964, President Johnson signed into law the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act, landmark legislation that established a dedicated and permanent funding stream for the purpose of protecting and conserving our nation's irreplaceable outdoor recreational, natural, historic and cultural landmarks.

Paid for by royalties collected from oil and gas companies, the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) has financed generations of projects to bring parks and clean, green spaces to the hearts of our urban areas. The suite of LWCF programs is critical for protecting natural lands, outdoor recreation opportunities, and working forests at the local, state and federal levels. Since its creation, the LWCF program has conserved more than 5 million acres of parks, recreation, forests, and other lands through the federal program and more than 2.6 million acres in communities throughout every state in the nation.

But LWCF does more than simply add to our public lands. Investing in LWCF is also an important way to grow our economy. The Outdoor Industry Association states that outdoor recreation contributes more than \$1.06 trillion annually to the U.S. economy, supports more than 9.4 million jobs, and stimulates 8 percent of all consumer spending. And The Trust for Public Land found that every \$1 invested in LWCF returns \$4 in economic value. Without LWCF funding to stimulate matching investments from state, local and private entities, this crucial economic driver will be lost.

These numbers prove the program's success, and I am pleased that the program is also extremely popular. In recent polls, more than 80 percent of voters expressed support for continuing to deposit fees from offshore oil and gas drilling into LWCF—this broad support extends from every geographic region of the country and every political persuasion. Supporters include governors, mayors, sportsmen, industry leaders, conservationists, Civil War enthusiasts, historians, recreationists, small businesses, forest owners, and the many Americans who see firsthand the tangible benefits this program has had on their communities and families.

Although LWCF has a dedicated revenue stream from offshore drilling royalties and takes no taxpayer money from the general fund, large portions of this funding have been diverted over the years to non-conservation purposes. Even at last year's appropriated level of \$306 million, we were a far cry from the \$900 million that is annually authorized for conservation work. In addition, LWCF's authorizing legislation is set to expire in September 2015, and it is imperative that we reauthorize this successful program before that date. I believe Congress should uphold its decades long commitment to land and water conservation and reinvestigate LWCF, thereby expanding opportunities for all Americans to

have access to parks and natural areas for outdoor recreation.

Along with the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act, President Johnson also signed into law the Wilderness Act. The Wilderness Act allows Congress to designate some public lands as "wilderness." These wilderness areas are designed to remain unchanged by humans—to allow ecological and evolutionary processes could be carried out without human intervention and give future generations a "glimpse of the world as it was in the beginning." As such, these areas are off-limits to commercial ventures, such as logging and mining, and permanent structures (roads and lodges), but they remain available for public exploration.

Just as our government had established the first national parks in the world almost a century earlier, the Wilderness Act made the United States the first country in the world to designate and protect wilderness. When it was first signed, the Wilderness Act designated 54 wilderness areas, protecting about 9.1 million acres in 13 states. Since that time, the number of wilderness areas has increased to more than 750, covering about 110 million acres of wilderness in 44 states. Our wilderness areas include some of the highest points of the Rockies to places like Linville Gorge in my home state of North Carolina's mountains. Sadly, some opponents of conservation in Congress would like to see this hard work undone. In 2012, for the first time, Congress actually took 222 acres out of the wilderness designation.

John Muir, founder of the Sierra Club, once said, "Wilderness is a necessity . . . There must be places for human beings to satisfy their souls." Today, in an increasingly urban nation, wilderness areas are ever more important as we need a place to get away, to enjoy and restore ourselves. Wilderness areas also serve to provide biological diversity, clean air and water, and baseline data for research as we deal with issues like climate change. We need to protect connected landscapes to sustain our fish and wildlife and other natural resources for the future.

So, while the 50th anniversary of each of these landmark bills is an occasion for celebration, it must also serve as a reminder of the work we have to do. I once heard it said that "America's public lands are like unfinished works of art; incomplete masterpieces." LWCF and the Wilderness Act will help to complete this work. In fact, that was the promise made to the American people 50 years ago when these bills were enacted. President Johnson wisely observed, "True leadership must provide for the next decade and not merely the next day." So, let us celebrate wilderness week and honor the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act and LWCF by renewing our commitment to protect our nation's wild places.